

## **MANSFIELD AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE**

### **Minutes of February 6, 2008 meeting**

#### **Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building**

#### **Conference Room B, 7:30 p.m.**

1. Acting Chairman, Bill Palmer, called the meeting to order at 7:40
2. PRESENT: Bill Palmer, Al Cyr, Charlie Galgowski, Vicky Wetherell, Carol Stearns, Ann Galonska, Ian Mills, Greg Padick
3. Minutes of the January 2, 2008, meeting were approved.

#### **Old Business**

##### **4. Historic Barn Project**

Committee members and Ann Galonska and Ian Mills (representing the Mansfield Historical Society) discussed tasks to be addressed by two subcommittees. The barn inventory subcommittee will meet on February 11 to organize the training session on February 21 and the inventory procedures. The barn photo contest subcommittee will meet on February 13 to finalize rules and procedures for the contest. Ian will add information about the barn project to the Historical Society's website with a link from the Town's website. Ian also provided a flyer to be handed out and posted at various locations and events.

#### **New Business**

##### **5. Zoning regulations for keeping of farm animals**

The committee reviewed with Greg Padick the PZC/IWA committee's comments about the Agriculture Committee's revision of proposed regulations. It was agreed that the regulations should be clear and enforceable. The PZC/IWA committee is not concerned about large farms, rather they are more concerned about animals on lots of 5 acres or less, and their impact on wetlands. The committee was concerned about the proposed regulations' potential impact on youth projects and on residents wanting to be more self-sufficient. Also, concern was expressed that a requirement for at least 80,000 square feet of dry, level land would exclude residents who could not afford a large lot and also those who want to have only a few small animals. The committee proposed that exemptions be granted on a case-by-case basis by the zoning officer (rather than by IWA application process). These exemptions would address site requirements, such as setbacks from wetlands, boundaries, etc. The possibility of exemptions for 4-H and similar projects was also proposed. The committee restated the need to measure animal units by weight. Greg will return for another discussion after the PZC/IWA committee has reviewed the above comments.

6. Commonfields agricultural fields

Jennifer Kaufman has sent a letter to the lessee stating that sludge is not to be applied to Town land again. The manufacturer has recommended a lime application to reduce the odor. The Town is planning to see how the late winter rain impacts the odor, then determine whether lime should be applied.

7. Farm building tax exemption

The committee discussed the Council's response to this proposal, which has been tabled for research into the issue.

8. March meeting

The committee agreed to move the March 5 meeting to March 12.

9. The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.